

LETTER TO CALVARY CHAPEL PASTORS REGARDING JAPAN

Dear Calvary Chapel Pastors:

I'm sure we all were both stunned and amazed as we watched the dramatic scenes unfold during the 9.0 Earthquake in Japan last week. Immediately after the news hit, we began efforts to contact all of our pastors in Japan and Okinawa. The good news is that none of our churches were directly impacted as our most northern Calvary Chapel church is in the northern part of Tokyo. All of our Calvary's are experiencing the post earthquake/tsunami effects of loss of electricity and phone service, food and gasoline shortages, and transportation shutdowns. But, by the grace of God, our pastors, churches and congregations appear to have been spared from this disaster. However, the impacts are continuing to unfold. As of this writing, there are over 10,000 dead, with many more expected, and nuclear reactor meltdowns appearing imminent. We currently do have one missionary, Janet McTaggart, that is unaccounted for in Sendai so please pray that the Lord brings word on her safety soon.

Our key liaison pastor to Japan is Lance Cook of Calvary Chapel La Habra. Lance has been active in Japan for many years and most of the works in Japan are direct plants of Lances. Lance has also been very active in several disaster relief efforts including the Kobe earthquake in 1995, the tsunami in Thailand and Katrina through CC La Habra's Committed Relief Ministry. Lance has been in continual contact with several of our CC pastors in Japan since Friday through Skype.

Since the earthquake hit on Friday we have been inundated with calls from ministries all over expressing concern and wanting to help. Japan is especially dear to our hearts, as it was the first place Committed Relief ever responded to a large-scale disaster. In 1995 they took a team from America and united with some Christian men from Tokyo. They reached out to the community of Kobe following an earthquake that took close to 4,000 lives. Since that time Lance, assisted by a team of Calvary Chapel pastors, have continued to minister in Japan doing outreaches, planting church's, and hosting leadership conferences. Sixteen years later we find ourselves preparing to help a devastated Japan once again. This time we have the privilege of coming beside people and churches we know and love.

There are a few things we are currently working on that we would like to share:

1. We are talking and praying daily with the pastors that we know in Japan to determine the best course of action in establishing a relief effort. Over the next few days some of these leaders will be traveling to some of the hard-hit areas to look for a location from which we might work. This is the most important step as we want to make sure we are in God's perfect will when we commit His people and His resources to accomplish His work.
2. We are focused at getting needed resources (non-perishable foods, water, etc.) into the disaster area ASAP and beginning distribution. This will create an opportunity to pray with people, hand out Bibles, and share the hope of Jesus Christ. We have found a food distributor in Nagoya that has ample inventory and we are currently working to fill up our first truck.
3. Some of the churches in and around the Tokyo area are also in need of non perishable foods, water, flashlights, & batteries. We would like to provide them with these resources ASAP.
4. We are compiling names of people who would like to travel to Japan to help. If you have anyone interested, you can direct them to the Committed Relief prompt on the Calvary Chapel La Habra website and have them fill out the contact form. At this point we are not sure when the first team will be going, but we will notify people as the door opens.

<http://www.calvarylahabra.org/>

<http://committedrelief.org/>

5. Initially we are running funds and staging resources through Pastor Chizuo Sakurai in Kokubunji in northern Tokyo. We will be sending our first wire transfer of funds this Friday. If you wish to participate in any capacity, please feel free to email or call either Lance Cook or Roger Wing. lance@calvarylahabra.org (714) 446-6222 rogerwing@calvarychapel.com (714) 979-4422

A team has been formed led by Lance with Jim Stewart of CC Kansas City, Roger Wing of CCOF and Chizou Sakurai of CC Kokubunji in Tokyo, all who have been active in Japan over the years. Lance will also be meeting with Pastor Marre Ishii tomorrow of Committed Fellowship Tokyo, who happens to be in the U.S. currently, to assist in developing the response plan. It is hoped that we will have a plan in place by the end of this week that we will communicate to all of you. Until then, we ask for your prayers as we seek the Lord as to the best way we can respond to the needs in Japan, both spiritually and physically. This is a disaster beyond our comprehension and we need to fervently commit the people and country of Japan to prayer.

Be blessed,

Lance Cook & Roger Wing

"And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful." Titus 3:14

Numbers 32:23-42 - Thursday, March 17th, 2011

- Last week, we only made it to verse 22 and, Lord willing, we'll be able to complete chapter 32 tonight, as we pick it up here in verse 23.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment because I deem it necessary to provide the back story as it relates to what's going on here.
- The tribes of Reuben and Gad, instead of entering the Promised-Land, have asked if they can stay on the east side of the Jordan river.

- Their decision and this request, has, and will continue to create problems, not only for them, but for the entire congregation of Israelites.
- This chapter becomes a mirror that shows us how we, like these tribes refuse to cross our Jordan and are kept from God's promises.
- In looking at the why behind the what of their unwillingness to go, we identified certain, "hidden hindrances," to us as believers.

1. Prosperity: in verse one we're told that they "had a very great multitude of livestock," which indicates, that they were now very wealthy.
2. Carnality: this can be missed at first glance, but note that this decision is made in the flesh, based solely on its economic implications.
3. Convenience: notice it's when they saw the land was a good place for their livestock and that it was conveniently located in that region.
4. Contentment: clearly, they're perfectly content right where they're at and don't want to move forward and press on stepping out in faith.
5. Selfishness: They are selfish and inconsiderate in that they have absolutely no regard for how this will impact the others in their faith.
6. Laziness: Simply put, the reason they want to stay put, is because moving is really hard work, and they're too lazy to do the hard thing.
7. Fear: They don't want to go to war, fight the battles, or take the risk because the fear in their hearts is paralyzing and immobilizing.
8. Discouragement: I am learning that the role discouragement plays in derailing and defeating the life of a believer can't be understated.
9. Mediocrity: This one is doubly dangerous because it not only hinders us it limits God in that we don't aspire to do great things for God.
10. Apathy: This exposes a hidden hindrance in the heart by virtue of ones lack of the commitment to follow through and do what's right.
- 11: Worldliness - They'd become so worldly minded they were of no heavenly good. They desired the things of the world more than God.
12. Arrogance: This may in some way, be the most detrimental of all the hindrances. They fancy themselves more highly than they ought.

23 But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out. 24 Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth." 25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; 27 but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

- Moses lays down the law by telling them that if they don't follow through on their commitment, they will have sinned against the Lord.
- He takes it a step further and says that they can be sure their sin will find them out, in that they will certainly reap that which they sown.
- 13. Sin: I see this hidden hindrance as secret sin. It's not God that will find you out, it's the sin itself that, when it's ripened, finds you out.

Galatians 6:7-8 NKJV (7) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. **(8)** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

28 So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29 And Moses said to them: "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30 But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." 31 Then the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying: "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. 32 We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us on this side of the Jordan."

- As we near the end of this chapter and, hopefully with it, the end of this problem, we need to pay particular attention to something here.
- We'll take a closer look at this at the conclusion, but suffice it to say, this request by these tribes has already become a huge hindrance.
- I would suggest that this is only the beginning. This one, seemingly small matter, becomes a big problem, because of how it ends up.

33 So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country.

- I find it quite interesting that half the tribe of Manasseh joins Reuben and Gad in their unwillingness to possess the Promised-Land.
- What this says to me is, these hidden hindrances in the life of a believer can become both divisive and seductive to a congregation.
- Let me explain; Reuben and Gad caused division in splitting the tribe of Manasseh in half, by seducing, or recruiting, the other half.

- Reuben, Gad, and now a split in half tribe of Manasseh, are not only divisive and seductive, they also become disruptive and corruptive.
- In Joshua 22, these two and a half tribes build an opposing altar, which causes Phinehas and 10 men to threaten a war against them.
- Like this whole chapter here in Numbers 32, so too is the whole chapter of Joshua 22, devoted to the resolving of this disruptive conflict.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, 35 Atroth and Shopan and Jazer and Jogbehah, 36 Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. 37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, 38 Nebo and Baal Meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah; and they gave other names to the cities which they built. 39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. 40 So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. 41 Also Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair. 42 Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.

- This ends the chapter, and in so doing, we'll fast forward the DVD, so-to-speak, and see what actually becomes of them and their land.
- First, it's important to note that even though they built all these cities on all this land, they were vulnerable to attack from the Assyrians.
- In other words, when we opt for doing our own thing in our own way, we are more vulnerable to the spiritual attack of the enemy.

- When we fast forward to Matthew 8, we find Jesus there in what became known as the region of the Gadarenes, named after the tribes.
- Matthew records how this area, once rich and fertile with livestock, was now full of demons and pigs. It's found in Matthew 8:28-34.

Matthew 8:28-34 NIV When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. (29) "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" (30) Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. (31) The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." (32) He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. (33) Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. (34) Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.